



# Northern & Western Regional Assembly

**MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN & WESTERN REGIONAL ASSEMBLY MEETING  
HELD ON 15<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2019 IN THE  
ASSEMBLY CHAMBER AT 11.00 A M**

---

**Present:**

Cllr Keith Henry	Cllr Seamus Coyle	Cllr Jackie Crowe
Cllr Nigel Dineen	Cllr Pearce Flannery	Cllr Jack Murray
Cllr Mary Hoade	Cllr Declan McDonnell	Cllr Jimmy McClearn
Cllr Paddy Smith	Cllr Gerry Murray	Cllr Frank Dolan
Cllr Joe Murphy	Cllr Justin Warnock	Cllr Enda Stenson
Cllr Richard Finn	Cllr Sean Smith	Cllr Niall McNelis

Cllr Seamus Coyle **PRESIDED**

**Apologies:**

Cllr. John Caulfield	Cllr Seamus O'Domhnaill	Cllr Dermot Connolly
Cllr Jerry Lundy	Cllr Seamus Kilgannon	
Cllr. Patsy O'Brien	Cllr Frank McBrearty	

Mr. Seamus Neely, Designated Chief Executive

**Officials: Northern & Western Regional Assembly:**

Mr David Minton (Director)  
Mr Denis Kelly (Assistant Director)  
Ms Caitlin Conneely (Assistant Director)  
Mr Frank Flanagan (Senior Executive Planner)  
Mr Conall McGettigan (Senior Executive Planner)  
Mr Gerry Lavelle (Programme Executive)  
Mr Brendan Mooney (EU Programmes Executive)  
Ms Brenda Finn (Clerical Officer)

**1. Adoption of Minutes of Meeting of Northern & Western Regional Assembly held  
18<sup>th</sup> January 2019**

**Proposed by:** Cllr Mary Hoade  
**Seconded by:** Cllr Enda Stenson  
**Resolved:**

*"That the minutes of the meeting of the Northern & Western Regional Assembly held on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2019 be adopted."*

get the strategy right and that we consider what is best for the region. Mr Kelly advised Members that he heard what was being said in relation to the Hierarchy of the MASP, Regional Centres and then Towns and that this was reflective from his initial screening of some submissions. He said that to be fair to all submissions it would be appropriate to ensure we consider all of them.

Mr Kelly advised that the team would work towards providing an update at the meeting scheduled for 7<sup>th</sup> March that would give a breakdown of the number of submissions and thereafter discuss in further detail at the SPA meetings scheduled for 12<sup>th</sup> (West – HQ) & 13<sup>th</sup> March (Border – Cavan tbc) and he suggested a joint SPA meeting be held at the end of March.

**Proposed by:** Cllr Declan McDonnell

**Seconded by:** Cllr Seamus Coyle

**Resolved:**

*“that the SPA meetings scheduled for 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> March be kept separate and that a joint SPA be scheduled for Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March to deal with the RSES meeting to be at 2pm in the Chamber.”*

### **3.2 Draft RSES for Southern Region**

Denis Kelly advised Members that the Southern Regional Assembly had consulted it in respect of the Draft RSES for the Southern Region. He outlined the content and layout of the Draft advising that it is complementary to the contents and layout of the Draft RSES for the Northern and Western Region. He advised that the settlement strategy places emphasis upon the consolidation of urban centres of scale, including Waterford, Cork and Limerick which together with Galway City shall complement the role of Dublin. He suggested that this Assembly should acknowledge the need for both the RSES for the NWRA and SRA to emphasise the need for intra-regional connectivity as a key issue for each region.

Mr Kelly confirmed that the Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC) is acknowledged as an economic growth enabler which is a shared opportunity to be harnessed for the benefit of both regions. He advised that the Assembly confirm that the economic reach of the AEC needs to be strengthened through enhanced connectivity (digital and transport) to enable the corridor and that an objective to strengthened collaboration and partnerships between the metropolitan areas of Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford with Galway and the Regional Centres of Sligo and Letterkenny to achieve regional parity with Dublin.

He noted that Limerick-Shannon MASP Policy Objective 8 seeks to deliver effective planning and investment into the Galway-Ennis-Shannon-Limerick (GESL) Economic Network. It was noted that the RSES referred to excellent public transport connections along the GESL and strengthened interaction with the Shannon Estuary, North Kerry and Kerry Knowledge Triangle and suggested that the NWRA should be supportive of this collaborative approach and mindful of it being reflected within the RSES for the N&W region.

Mr Kelly asked Members to also note commonality of RPO's and regional enablers across both RSESs that would benefit from close collaboration at implementation stage He said that some of these included but is not limited to:

- regional freight strategy.

- ❖ Will the Regional Operational Programme post 2020 be managed by the NWRA as the Assembly has been a Managing Authority for three programming periods and the members see this as a vital role to leverage funds into the region?
- ❖ Will the NWRA be given the opportunity to administer any funds that may be made available regarding Brexit? There is considerable expertise and experience in the Regional Assembly and the Local Authorities, and it is vital that they be central to the management of any funding, especially if infrastructural funding becomes available. The region is now going to be In Transition and, as a border region, will be affected disproportionately by Brexit, therefore it is important that there is a role for the Assembly in managing any funds that may be available.
- ❖ It is important that investment by EU is communicated to the general public. It is also important that the COR members are briefed on issues as they can reflect EU issues and concerns back to Local Authority level. The EU is struggling in the context of Brexit however the regions are recognized as the basis of rebuilding support for the EU.
- ❖ Members have been involved in a significant number of cross-border initiatives over the years including the Local Authority led Cross Border Network which has achieved great work and investment through partnerships of Local Authorities on both sides of the border. Members feel that this work, and other regional cross border initiatives must be maintained and supported post Brexit.

Michael acknowledged the concerns raised and the confirmed the following:

- ❖ The EU Budget was compiled on the assumption that the UK leaves the EU.
- ❖ There is an understanding in the Government that help is required post Brexit.
- ❖ When a Region is classed as 'In transition' the types of investments can be more flexible, however there are limits to what ERDF funding can do in relation to infrastructure.
- ❖ A significant number of Regions have moved backwards into transition status. Some have moved primarily due to a realignment of the calculation however the BMW region, and one/two others, have moved back into Transition status even by the calculations used previously. This is a cause for concern by the EU and the Department.
- ❖ The EU, Ireland and the UK have committed to continuing the PEACE Plus Programme
- ❖ National allocations of ERDF are based on population - the smaller the population, the smaller the allocation so it is difficult to increase allocations to specific regions
- ❖ Ireland does not qualify for cohesion funding any longer
- ❖ The current focus of TenT is on completion of core TenT network i.e. already completed in Ireland. There may be an opportunity to look at links to the core network in a second phase of Ten T.
- ❖ Confirmed that the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform is carrying out a Review of ERDF Structures at present. He cannot preempt the outcome of the process but envisages a change in the ways the Regional funds are delivered due to the decreasing amounts of funding involved.

Michael agreed to speak to the Committee of the Regions on a future date.

**9. Any Other Business**

**Proposed by:** Cllr Justin Warnock

**Seconded by:** Cllr Frank Dolan

**Resolved:**

*“that the Northern and Western Regional Assembly support a call for a moratorium on forestry in Leitrim”*

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing minutes are confirmed.

**Signed:**



**Cathaoirleach**

**Date:**

07-03-2019.